



The Bellarmine Pre-Law Council

PRE - LAW REVIEW



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Announcing the new:

Bellarmino Pre-Law Council

Since its inception, the Bellarmine Law Academy has existed as a student-run organization dedicated to providing resources for BC pre-law students. Recently, under the guidance of Associate Dean J. Joseph Burns, we have seen tremendous growth in the number of students declaring Pre-Law intentions. With over 700 pre-law students, we have decided that a new pre-law structure is absolutely necessary.

Nick Scott, our Vice President, has been the driving force behind redrafting the constitution, reorganizing the club, and helping Mock Trial become a separate entity. Using the model of a leadership council as our guide, we will be finalizing the structure of the Bellarmine Pre-Law Council in coming weeks.

So what does this mean for BC? Under the old structure, all pre-law students were technically members in good standing of the Bellarmine Law Academy. Although this has proven beneficial, we have recently encountered great difficulty because of

the number of pre-law students at BC.

The Bellarmine Pre-Law Council, or BPLC will still be completely student run, but will include a different concept of membership. While subject to change over the next few weeks, the council itself will be made up of 12 seats, and will be responsible providing resources to the pre-law population at BC. These resources will be things like; LSAT classes, practice LSAT's, guest speakers, resume workshops, admissions seminars, and even newsletters like this!

Although we are still in the planning stages, designs exist to position four councilpersons as class representatives to make sure that the needs of each pre-law class at BC are met. Similarly, at least one BPLC "planning meeting" per month will be open to the general pre-law population so that anyone who is interested can get involved.

As soon as we iron out all the details, we will send out a complete update! Feel free to contact me if you have any questions, comments, or concerns!

-Tom Carco, President

PowerScore

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Introduction to Legal Studies

By Juliet Mohnkern

So you are thinking about going to law school? Well at least you think you are thinking about going to law school in that nebulous “what else am I going to do after college?” way. Or maybe you have been positive since fourth grade that ESQ will be at the end of your name by age twenty-five. Or perhaps you took an legal survey class sophomore year in high school and have been curious about jurisprudence ever since. Whatever your motivation, you will not be disappointed by taking Introduction to Legal Studies. This too often overlooked course is a comprehensive and thought-provoking introduction, as may be assumed from the title, to Jurisprudence, Legal Reasoning, American Constitutional Theory, Federalism, Contracts, Property Rights, Criminality, and Harm and Fault. Almost every topic caused me to reevaluate my assumptions about the terms I had gleaned from years of watching *Law and Order* instead of memorizing Latin vocabulary.

The topics themselves would be enough to keep most droopy eyed students awake at the 8:30am every Monday and Wednesday, but the professors, Katz and Dowden, create a stimulating environment almost as eye-opening as that first sip of Carmel Mochito. Professor Katz is the Libby Professor at Boston College Law School. He holds the only endowed chair at the law school. Professor Katz is obviously very knowledgeable and his passion for legal studies is contagious. Mr. Dowden graduated from both Boston College and Boston College Law School with high honors, is currently working at Boston’s Ropes and Gray, and will be a visiting professor at the Law School next year. He

animated in the classroom calling on people at random and at times very adding to the reality of a fact pattern by imitating a trip and fall incident.

Katz’s and Dowden’s goal in this course is to introduce Liberal Arts undergraduates to legal concepts via a study of theory and practice. The course is also shaped to be a preparation for Boston College’s program at Pembroke at Oxford in England. Sophomores can apply to this program to go abroad for their junior year and study at Oxford’s law school. The program is highly rated by all student who have attended it and a wonderful opportunity for all those interested in pursuing law careers. Even if you cannot make it to Pembroke, Introduction to Legal Studies is an excellent preparation for further legal study. Professor Katz and Mr. Dowden are always available and often act as advisor for those in the class planning to attend law school. Basically Introduction to Legal Studies is a wonderful class taught by enthusiastic and helpful Professors. Even the waking up at seven every Monday and Wednesday morning is not enough to make me think twice about taking this class. In fact Introduction to Legal Studies reinvigorated my drive to attend to law school. Like a law school class, Professor call on students randomly and the midterm and final consist on analyzing a fact pattern and applying it to legal concepts and precedents. It is a wonderful preparation for law school and a thought-provoking experience for any Liberal Arts student. I urge anyone interested in law in any respect to register for this class. It may take a little extra effort to find it in the University Courses section of the Registration newspaper, but it is well worth it and I hear it will not be at 8:30am next spring either.



A Season in Pictures...



Myths and Realities of Law School

Law School Myth #1: I did well in college and on the LSAT. These are excellent indicators of how well I will do in law school.

Reality: Great undergraduate grades, a high LSAT score, and hard work will NOT ensure good grades in law school. Competition in law school is fierce. Unlike undergrad, your law school classmates are all excellent students. Everyone enters law school with a comparable undergraduate GPA and LSAT score (or they wouldn't have been accepted!). They are all motivated, and like you, they all intend to be at the top of their law school class. By definition, 50% of these outstanding students will be in the bottom 1/2 of the class. The majority of the students will be "C+" students in law school and the vast majority of 1L's will get not A's - not even one.

Law School Myth #2: I can use the same study skills and strategies as I did in college and graduate school, and I should expect the same results.

Reality: Your formula for success in college or graduate school will not work in law school or on law school exams. Memorizing and "knowing the law" is not enough. You are on your own to develop essential skills such as how to brief cases, how to analyze and synthesize legal arguments, and how to prepare for and take law school exams. New skills and strategies are needed to *think like a lawyer!*

Law School Myth #3: Like college, grades in law school are based on my overall performance (including class participation, midterms, and term papers). I'll get feedback from my professors and make the necessary adjustments along the way.

Reality: In law school your entire grade typically depends solely on *one* 3-4 hour final exam in each course at the end of the semester or at the end of the year. Class participation, mid-terms, and term papers are not usually factors in grade determination, and there is no feedback from your professors during the semester from which you can gauge your performance.

Law School Myth #4: If I don't do well my first year, I'll recover and make up for it in later semesters. Employers will look at my 2nd and 3rd year grades.

Reality: Your first year grades are critical. They will determine your class rank and ultimately, your job opportunities. Top law firms recruit during the fall semester of your 2nd year, looking only at your first year grades. Your GPA and class rank established at the end of the first year will remain relatively unchanged for the remainder of law school. Few students recover from an unsuccessful first year. The key to excelling in law school is doing well your first semester.

Kaplan Ad

LSAT vs. Future Salary: The Importance of Test Preparation

The decision to take a preparation course for the LSAT is often a difficult one for potential test takers. After all, \$395 to \$1,095 is a considerable amount of money to spend, especially for the mere possibility of gaining ten to twelve points on a single test.

There is, however, an underlying investment in your test preparation efforts. The following chart lists various LSAT scores from 145 to 170 and the corresponding schools that (in the graduating class of 2000) admitted approximately fifty percent (50%) of applicants with those scores. When graduates from these represented schools are analyzed post-graduation in terms of starting salary and likelihood of securing gainful employment, the LSAT score paints an incredibly accurate picture of what graduates entering the private sector can expect to earn, as well as the unemployment rate those students will find themselves facing at graduation.

Average LSAT Score	Average Starting Salary Range		% Unemployed Upon Graduation
145-149	\$36,558	\$55,417	9.00%
150-154	\$38,111	\$61,550	6.00%
155-159	\$40,971	\$66,142	5.60%
160-164	\$64,000	\$110,962	2.80%
165-169	\$98,909	\$125,000	0.50%
170 & Up	\$119,167	\$125,833	0.30%

It should be immediately clear that even a five-point increase in your LSAT score can ultimately produce a huge difference in your starting salary upon graduation. Most notably, the five-point differential between an LSAT score of 155 and 160 results in an average salary increase of \$33,924.50 (155: \$53,556.50; 160: \$87,481.00) for the first year of employment. When considering an LSAT preparation course such as those offered by PowerScore, you should be aware that increases greater than five points are commonplace. In fact, students have seen their scores improve by ten, fifteen, even twenty points or more, resulting in a tremendous increase in their potential salary based on the law of averages represented in the chart above.

The importance of LSAT preparation is further increased by that fact that, for the vast majority of law school applicants, their GPA is already established. The LSAT, then, is one of the few real determining factors that the student can affect.

A second trend of increasing LSAT scores is, on average, an increasing level of employment. The statistics given here represent graduates from particular colleges who actively seek employment and are unable to find it for at least six months. Actual unemployment figures for the universities listed above are slightly higher, as some students pursue further degrees and others do not seek immediate employment upon graduation, but the important percentage to consider is that of graduates unable to find employment they deem appropriate.

When evaluating salaries, you should remember that these are typically considered high-end salaries, that is, starting salaries from the private sector are, on average, higher than those of the public sector (the public sector includes government employment, judicial clerkships, academic employment, etc.). While the majority of students are employed in private sector areas upon graduation, average salaries for all graduates are going to be slightly lower for each school listed. Also, the salaries here are only for the first year of employment. In other words, the nearly \$34,000 separating the starting salaries for a 155 and 160 very likely applies to the years that follow the first year of employment. So, assuming constant pay rates, after three years that five point LSAT difference is worth over \$100,000!

It should be clear from the information above that even a seemingly small improvement in your LSAT score can open doors to a future you may have never considered possible. While there is no guarantee that a particular score, or even enrollment in one of the schools listed, will result in a salary that falls in the given range, a vast number of test takers (and, eventually, law school graduates) will find themselves with the opportunity to earn an amount that corresponds with their initial LSAT results. That said, do not gamble with your financial future when an opportunity to help secure it is well within reach.

Contributed by PowerScore Test Preparation.
Visit PowerScore at: www.powerscore.com.

Upcoming Events

FREE Logic Games Seminar!!!

Saturday, April 26th

11AM - 2PM

Gasson 209

Sponsored by PowerScore, this seminar includes strategies for answering Logic Games in general, plus working through a few actual questions. While many students fear the games questions, these exercises are a great way to learn how to beat the LSAT!

Application Orientation for Juniors!!!

Wednesday, April 16th

8 PM

Devlin 216

Are you starting to worry about what you should be doing to prepare for the application process? Well good! It's about time!!! We will have a number of current seniors there to answer all of your questions and even tell you what is just around the corner in the application process! Don't miss this great opportunity to get a jump start on finding the law school of your dreams!!!

Your Bellarmine Pre-Law Council:

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Law School Application Schedule

Junior Year

Spring

1. Register with LSDAS.
2. Prepare for LSAT (courses, books, etc.).
3. Take the LSAT on June 9th (register by May 7th)
4. Read the Official Guide to US Law Schools and consider the schools to which you might apply
5. Think about who might write references for you.

Summer

1. Send transcript to LSDAS.
2. Decide on competitive, safety, and long-shot schools to which you will apply.
3. Draft a generic personal statement.
4. If possible, visit the law schools that interest you.

Senior Year

Fall

1. Take the LSAT if you haven't already!!!
Oct. 4th registration deadline is Sept. 3rd.
Dec. 6th registration deadline is Nov. 5th
2. Apply!!! Make sure you know what the deadlines are for each of the schools you apply to!

Winter/Spring

1. Send fall transcript directly to law schools (by 1/15)
2. Wait, wait, wait, wait...
3. Visit Schools to which you have been admitted.
4. Make a deposit to one school only!
5. Update the schools at which you have been waitlisted on your latest GPA, honors, thesis, etc.

The Law School Application Schedule was developed by Dean J. Joseph Burns of the College of Arts and Sciences.

TestWell

Ad

